GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:193
ANSWERED ON:24.02.2016
IT Accessibility in Rural Areas
Choudhary Col. (Retd) Sona Ram

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the salient features of the ongoing schemes implemented for making information technology more accessible across the country;
(b) the details of the efforts made to make information technology accessible to the people residing in rural and remote areas;
(c) whether effective steps are being taken or proposed to be taken for decentralisation of information technology in the country; and
(d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

(a) The Government of India is implementing an umbrella programme, namely Digital India to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

(b) The Government of India is implementing several schemes/projects to make information technology accessible to the people residing in rural and remote areas. The following schemes/projects are specially targeted to create access and connectivity in rural and remote areas to enable people in these areas to participate in the Digital India programme:

(i) Common Services Centres (CSCs): The CSCs are Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enabled kiosks with broadband connectivity to provide various Governments, private and social services at the doorstep of the citizen. As on date 1.43 lakh CSCs have been made operational in 36 States/UTs.

(ii) Digital Literacy to the masses: DeitY is implementing following two Schemes namely (a) IT Mass Literacy (National Digital Literacy Mission) and (b) 'Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (????) under 'Digital India' for providing Digital Literacy to the masses.

So far, under the NDLM/DISHA schemes, around 49 lakh candidates have been registered, a total of 36.5 lakh students have been trained and approximately 14.5 lakh students have been certified. A total of 1875 organizations are working as Training Partners under these schemes.

(iii) National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN): The Government has proposed to provide broadband connectivity to 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats under NOFN (renamed now as BharatNet) project. Optical fibre for broadband connectivity has reached to 40,333 Gram Panchayats and optical fiber cable has been laid for 94,689 kms.

(iv) Rural Wireline Broadband Scheme: The scheme envisaged provision of wire-line broadband connectivity to rural & remote areas by leveraging the existing rural exchanges infrastructure and copper wire-line network. This scheme has been implemented at pan-India level with the objective to make the rural and remote areas broadband enabled by facilitating the service providers in creating Broadband. A total of 6,56,345 broadband connections have been provided and 15,671 kiosks have been set up in rural and remote areas.

(v) Optical Fibre Network Augmentation, Creation and Management of Intra-District SDHQ-DHQ OFC Network: For provision of broadband in rural areas, sufficient back-haul capacity is required to integrate the voice and data traffic from the access network in the rural areas to their core network by strengthening the OFC network. Accordingly, this scheme considers OFC Network augmentation between the blocks' HQ and Districts' HQ to begin with. The states of Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland have been taken up for implementation.

(c) and (d): Yes, Sir. The Government of India is implementing 44 Mission Mode Projects and core ICT infrastructure projects/schemes, namely State Data Centre (SDC), State Wide Area Network (SWAN), Common Service Centers (CSCs), State Portal and State Service Delivery Gateway (SSDG). These schemes/projects are being implemented by Central Ministries/Departments and State/UT Governments and foster the decentralization of Information Technology at State/UT level.

****